



## OVERVIEW

This lesson is designed for students to express their feelings regarding name-calling using an artistic form of poetry. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on personal experiences regarding name-calling. In addition, students will engage in discussions about the effects of name-calling on their school and emotions connected with name-calling.



## OBJECTIVES

Students will describe the state of name-calling in school.  
Students will demonstrate empathy for those targeted by name-calling.  
Students will be able to identify and express their emotions around name-calling.



## AGE/EXPERIENCE LEVEL

Grades 3-5.



## THINGS TO PREP & TOOLS NEEDED

Flip chart paper, 8 ½ X 11 paper, pencils, sample poems (included in this lesson plan).



## TIME

35-60 minutes.

## PROCEDURE: PART 1 – INTRODUCTION/INDIVIDUAL BRAINSTORMING (5-10 MINUTES)

**Goal:** Students will be introduced to the activity and sample poems.

**Preparation:** Have students sit in a comfortable group setting such as a circle or half circle. If class already has ground rules, review them or quickly create some, e.g. respect each other, speak one at a time and so on.

**Activity:** Begin the activity by having students read two or more of the poems included in this lesson. Let students know that these are poems from the No Name-Calling Week Creative Expression Exhibit, submitted by students from across the country. Find last year's Creative Expression submissions at [www.glsen.org/nncw](http://www.glsen.org/nncw). After the poems have been read, inform students that they will create a poem that expresses their thoughts about name-calling.

### **PART 2 – INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION (5-10 MINUTES)**

**Goal:** Students will engage in individual reflection regarding name-calling and begin to transform their ideas into poems.

**Preparation:** Provide students with paper to respond to the questions posed in the activity.

**Activity:** Inform students that you will be asking them a series of questions and that they should write down words that come to mind. Express to the students that the responses don't need to be full sentences, but can be phrases or words that allow them to creatively respond. There are no wrong answers, as these are their personal feelings.

Explain that there will be a group reflection later on but for now they should keep their work to themselves and work alone.

Suggested questions: Allow students time to write their responses after each question

- What is name-calling?
- What are the first three words that come to mind when you hear the phrase name-calling?
- Name three reasons why you think name-calling happens.
- Imagine you were being called a mean name or someone made fun of you, what are the first feelings that come to mind?
- Imagine you were the one calling someone a mean name or making fun of someone, what are the first words that come to mind that describe how you are feeling?
- What are some names you want to be called?
- What are some adjectives, describing words, or identities that are important to you?
- What do you think our school would look like if there were no name-calling?

### **PART 3 – GROUP REFLECTION (5-10 MINUTES)**

**Goal:** Students will engage in group reflection about name-calling and identity.

**Activity:** Have students share some of their responses to the prior activity. In order to explore similarities in responses, have students raise their hands whenever someone reads a word or phrase that they also wrote down. Record some common words and phrases on flip chart paper for students to see.

After students' responses have been shared, ask students to read the words and phrases recorded



## POETIC REACTIONS

on the flip chart paper and encourage them to use these during the next activity.

### **PART 4 – CREATIVE EXPRESSION (10-20 MINUTES)**

**Goal:** Students will express themselves through poetry.

**Preparation:** Students should have access to their personal and group reflections, as well as copies of the short poems accompanying this lesson plan.

**Activity:** Invite students to sit where they can write comfortably. Provide time for students to quietly review their personal and the group responses. Then ask students to think about what name-calling means to them and what are some of the things they would do to stop name-calling. Instruct students to begin writing a poem that expresses these thoughts.

Let students know that there is no right way to write poetry and that they should not be scared to be creative and really express themselves. Let students sit in quiet writing for at least 10 minutes.

### **PART 4 – CLOSING (10-15 MINUTES)**

**Goal:** Students will share their poems with the rest of the class.

**Activity:** Ask students if they would like to share their poems. Give students the opportunity to share with someone next to them. Then have students volunteer to read their poems aloud for the class, either from their seat or in front of the room.

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIFFERENTIATION**

Students who need more support can be given an outline structure for their poem, such as an “I Am” list poem, or a “blackout” poem, where students are given a page of words from the brainstorm session and use a marker to cross out words they don’t want to have in their poem. Students who need more of a challenge can be assigned a specific type of poem to create such as a sonnet or a haiku.

### **FOLLOW-UP/EXTENSIONS**

With permission, the poems and creations that the students make can be submitted to GLSEN’s Creative Expressions Exhibit at [www.glsen.org/creativeexpressions](http://www.glsen.org/creativeexpressions). Student poems can also be hung around the classroom, in the school hallway or lobby, or read on the morning announcements. Partner with the art teacher to continue the idea of creative expressions for students sharing identities and





## POETIC REACTIONS

names they want to be called, or their visions for a safer and kinder school.

### **OTHER LESSONS TO EXPLORE**

Building a Bully-Free School, Garden of Kindness, That's a (Gender) Stereotype!

### **TAGS**

No Name-Calling Week, anti-bullying, art, creative expression.





## POETIC REACTIONS

### HANDOUT

No Name-Calling Poem

By David B.

My name is Daniel, not wimp or brat; it is not nice to call me that.

Don't call anyone dumb, weak or lame; instead, call them by their given name.

The result for being mean and nasty is to be excluded, but being kind and friendly is rewarded by being included.

Don't give names to others because they're big, small, short or tall, remember the rule, if you have nothing nice to say, don't say anything at all.

Love has no shape, height, color or race,  
love is kindness, dignity, beauty and grace.

It Hurts

By Olivia H.

Name-calling.

It's wrong and hurtful.

It's a shame, but who's to blame?

Come on school bullies it's not a  
game. Why do we name call?

Is it to gain fame?

People get hurt and they feel like dirt.

They get put down and have a frown.

So why name call all around.

Let's just get along when  
we're on the playground.

DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN THIS ACTIVITY? TELL US HOW IT WENT AND WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER!  
EMAIL US AT [EDUCATORS@GLSEN.ORG](mailto:EDUCATORS@GLSEN.ORG).

